



Heritage Herald

July/August 2025

The Newsletter of Heritage Hill

Volume MMXXV, No.4

LET'S
CONNECT

- + Family, friends & neighbors
- + GR firefighters
- + K-9 officers
- + Free ice cream treats
- + Yard games, Picnicking
- + Meet your city officials
- + YOU

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NIGHT
OUT

*Tuesday
August 5
6-8 pm*

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The Heritage Hill 2025 National Night Out
is sponsored by:

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and A Pleasant Dog



The Heritage Hill Association

252 State St SE Ste 101
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-459-8950

Facebook:  @heritagehill

Instagram:  @heritagehillassociation

Hours: 9 am - 5 pm, Mon. - Thurs.
Voicemail available for after-hours messages.
EMAIL: heritage@heritagehillweb.org
WEBSITE: www.heritagehillweb.org

Want to be in-the-know and included in neighborhood e-blasts?
Contact our office to add your email address!

Purpose:

The purpose of the Heritage Hill Association is to provide neighbors a way of collectively building a healthy, historically preserved community in which people can live and work in a secure and stable environment.

Office Staff:

Laska Nygaard, Executive Director
Carly Durham-Bruins, Public Safety Community Organizer
Maria Zache Starkey, Office Manager

The Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors:

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*Bryan Cody, Prospect Ave NE

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*James McClurg, College Ave SE
*Jennifer Meeks, College Ave SE
**Wayne Norlin, Morris Ave SE
*Jeff Phillips, Paris Ave SE

*1st Term

** 2nd Term

Heritage Hill Association board of directors meets at 7pm at the Community Education room of Trinity Health at 200 Jefferson Ave SE. The meetings are open to the public. Please contact the office at heritage@heritagehillweb.org or 616-459-8950 for access instructions for any upcoming meeting.

The Heritage Hill Association provides information and encourages neighbor participation to keep Heritage Hill safe and vital. This community organizing engages neighbors to work on issues that arise. As an association of neighbors, we have a strong voice but we have no regulatory authority.

The GR Historic Preservation Commission regulates the City's Preservation Ordinance. Applications and approvals are needed from this city department before beginning any exterior work or repairs. Contact 616-456-3451 or rbaker@grcity.org.

The Heritage Herald - Circulation 4,000

The Heritage Herald is published by the Heritage Hill Association Board of Directors six times a year (bi-monthly). The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors. We reserve the right to edit. Address correspondence to The Heritage Herald, 252 State St SE, Ste 101, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

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This and That

by Heritage Hill Staff

Spring Litter Clean Keeps on Growing!

Our Annual Spring Litter Clean continues to grow! This year we passed our goal of 52 blocks signed up to be cleaned during the third week in April (56 blocks were adopted!) and met the goal of 40 neighbors participating. **Thank you to all** who signed up and helped make the neighborhood beautiful. The Hill looked gorgeous this spring, just in time for the Tour of Homes and Garden Tour.

Prizes were awarded this year, thanks to generous sponsors. The top prize for most blocks cleaned went to Nicholas P. who cleaned 7 Heritage Hill blocks! We had a three-way tie for second place and a six-way tie for third place. All 10 were awarded prizes generously donated by: Wealthy Street Bakery (a \$25 gift card), Romence Gardens (a \$10 gift card and a plant), and Art of the Table (6 tins of yummy cakes). Thanks to those businesses for their continued support!



We ended the week with Pleasant Park Pals and their annual clean-up in Pleasant Parks, complete with donuts from HHA and our third partner of South Hill Neighborhood Association, to come together and weed, mulch, and plant. Thanks to all who helped maintain and beautify Pleasant Park.

Garden Tour Thanks!

A heatwave did not deter from a very successful Garden Tour 2025, held on June 21 both as a fundraiser and fun-raiser. Avid garden enthusiasts roamed the twelve, lush and strikingly gorgeous gardens, providing neighborhood views usually reserved for the featured Heritage Hill gardeners.

We so appreciate all of the people who have made this tour possible: Central Reformed Church, Meyer May House / Steelcase, Child Discovery Center, Elders' Helpers, Martha's Vineyard, Boardwalk Subs and Wormies. Also a huge thanks to the Garden Hosts who kindly shared their spaces and staffed their gardens for the tour: Brian Deyo & Mayra Fortes, Nate & Amanda Rauh-Bieri, Central Reformed Church, Jeremy Scotala, Janet & David Parker, Doug Meeks & Greg McNeilly, Catherine Birkbeck, Leonard on Logan Bed & Breakfast, Lauren & Stephen Saunders, Ed Long & Julia Hawkins, Mary Walendowski, Mandy & Brian Miller.

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Heartfelt thanks also go out to all of the volunteers, selling tickets, planting signs and assisting our intrepid Garden Tour Chair Kate Diedrich and her faithful assistant Dan Diedrich.

Amazing Mr. Anonymous

Neighbor Mr. Anonymous has kept the office staff at HHA from starving to death or dying of thirst in the days leading up to this year's Home Tour, as well as other offerings throughout the year. Ever locally-minded and making a difference in immediate community in many ways, Mr. Anonymous is generous beyond words and our appreciation cannot be overstated. Thank you!



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**Come say
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When: Thursday, August 21

Time: 7:00-9:00PM

Where: Child Discovery Center
at 409 Lafayette St. SE

With: The Grand River Squares
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dancing clubs*

BRING: You, your friends & family,
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at the Child Discovery Center at the
corner of Lafayette and Wealthy!



* These partner clubs make square
dancing available to everyone! Happy
Soles Beginner lessons are Wednesdays
from 6:30-8:00 PM. Grand River Squares
Plus and Advanced lessons are Tuesdays
7:00-9:00 PM. Both groups meet at
Marge's Doughnut Den, 1751 28th St SW,
Wyoming, MI.

Applause to our 2025 Heritage Hill Annual Weekend Tour of Homes Sponsors –

These sponsors were not thanked in the May/June issue because of the timing of that issue.

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530 Douglas Ave.

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www.stuartneighborhood.org



SUMMER 2025 GARDEN CLUB EVENTS

Thursday, July 17 — Tour The Corner Bike Shop Gardens

✿ 591 Jefferson SE, Grand Rapids

Join us for a private tour of this creative and inspiring urban garden space! You'll explore community garden plots, beautiful flower beds, a children's play garden, and a newly developing orchard — all showcasing an incredible flair for repurposing and garden design.

Thursday, August 21 — Field Trip to Bremer U-Pick Flower Farm

✿ 8th Ave., Hudsonville, MI

Take a summer field trip to one of the largest u-pick flower farms in the Midwest! Stroll through 2+ acres of blooming fields with thousands of flowers and enjoy the fun of making your own bouquet to take home.

Thursday, September TBD — Backyard Garden Transformation & Neighborhood Walk

✿ Hosted by Alexander & Susannah Nutkins, 559 College Ave SE, Grand Rapids

Join us as Alexander and Susannah open their beautifully transformed backyard, sharing the creative ideas, tips, and tricks they used to redesign their space. After touring their garden, we'll take a short walk to visit several other nearby gardens for even more inspiration.

Thursday, October 16 — End-of-Season Plant Swap & Gathering

✿ Hosted by the Ackermans, 522 Prospect SE, Grand Rapids

We'll wrap up the garden season together with a casual plant swap, plenty of garden stories, and great conversation. Bring any plants, cuttings, or seeds you'd like to share — and take home something new for next season!

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from her friends at the

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Chuck and Patricia Posthumus

Barbara Roelofs

Norah Sinas

Shahin and Jeni Taheri

Chris and Tom Truesdale

Gerald Wheeler



REMEMBER HERITAGE HILL PROPERTY OWNERS:

There is a City Preservation Ordinance that governs all exterior changes, repairs and/or additions to Heritage Hill properties. Call the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission at 456-3451 for information on approvals. You can access the application form at the City's website, www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us at the Planning Department section or at the Heritage Hill Association's www.heritagehillweb.org.

This ordinance applies to all exterior changes, repairs, and/or additions to your home and property. Items such as doors and windows including storms, yard structures, driveway and sidewalk approaches, and fences do need HPC approvals.



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Remembrances



Sue Karsen

Long-time Heritage Hill neighbor Sue Karsen passed away in early June. Sue was a dear friend to many in The Hill, including current and former staff and Board Members of Heritage Hill Association. HHA expresses its sincere condolences at her loss, and we share some personal remembrances here.

We lost a cherished neighbor this past June, Sue Karsen. Sue and her husband Jim moved into an apartment on Prospect Ave. NE in 1979 as newlyweds, and later happily bought their cherished home on Crescent St. NE, where they lived and contributed to the neighborhood for many years. They were always out front and involved in the community. Jim was a beloved and long-serving HHA board President and upon his passing in 2008, the "Lunch with Sue" group (as I call it) was born at Jim's Memorial Service; a small group of neighbors decided that a way to honor Jim would be to get to know his wife Sue better. What a gift we were given in that friendship ever since. We lost other husbands in the group over time and even one of our own members, and added another cherished neighbor. Sue was the best interviewer I ever met. She could ask a string of thoughtful questions that always got to the heart of the matter and continued to be very interested in the happenings and developing improvements of Heritage Hill. She volunteered even after moving away from the neighborhood in her last years. I told the lunch group that I didn't know until she was gone how much Sue

had "wheedled" her way into my heart.

-Maria Zache Starkey, HHA Office Manager

Sue was a person who always kept herself well-informed about what was going on, in the world, with her family and friends, and also in Heritage Hill even though she hadn't lived in the Hill for years.

Sue loved to see the latest movies, have monthly lunches with friends, and attend her book club meetings. Sue enjoyed the Symphony in person and on the radio. Sue always had fun glasses with wonderful colored frames that stood out against her beautiful white hair and reflected her personality! She liked bright colors!

Sue had a welcoming smile and a mischievous twinkle in her eye! One never had to wonder how Sue felt about a situation, for she would tell them whether they wanted to hear it or not!

- Suzanne De Haan, retired HHA Board Member, and outgoing Home Tour Chair

I'm missing my friend Sue. Her unbounded curiosity led her to love music, travel, literature, nature, history, and her own backyard. I shared these loves and our times together were spent detailing our latest trips, camping stories, recent books, and more. No one loved playing Heritage Hill bingo more than Sue. "I gotta go" was my usual parting as Sue always wanted one more story. We laughed with and at each other at our treasured yoga and tai chi classes and retreats. Her audible grunts and groans coming in and falling out of poses

mirrored what all of us were silently enduring. You always knew when Sue was in class.

Sue was a social worker and her empathy for all those in need guided her activism in health and aging care. She never shied away from speaking her mind to those that could make change.

I'll miss Sue in my life. She was a unique character in all great ways.

- Jan Earl, retired HHA Executive Director

You can read more about Sue by visiting metcalfandjonkhoff.com/obituary/Sue-Karsen.



Sue receiving the volunteerism award named after Jim



Sue and Jim in their yard on Crescent St. NE



Paul Lee

HHA also remembers. Paul, who with his wife, Jessica, launched The Winchester, Donkey Taqueria, and Hancock on the Wealthy Street SE corridor. Paul's vision, energy and hard work not only revitalized the East Hills Neighborhood, but the positive effects of his efforts made Heritage Hill and other nearby neighborhoods better, more appealing, and more valuable. Because of Paul, we all live in a more vibrant and special larger community of neighbors, and he is missed. Paul left much too soon, due to cancer, at age fifty-one. Our deepest condolences to Paul's family.

Neighborhood Potpourri

Fireworks Reminder

Late night fireworks have been disturbing parts of the neighborhood already this year. Veterans can particularly suffer from loud noise. When fireworks are kept to permitted hours, veterans can plan and take steps to ameliorate the possible

effects. Remember that historic homes are more susceptible to the danger of fire from fireworks sparks. Please use extreme caution when using fireworks and adhere to usage dates:

- December 31 until 1:00 a.m. on January 1.
- The Saturday and Sunday

immediately preceding Memorial Day until 11:45 p.m. on each of those days.

- June 29 to July 4 until 11:45 p.m. on each of those days.
- July 5, if that date is a Friday or Saturday, until 11:45 p.m.
- The Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding Labor

Historic Preservation Awards The Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Awards were held Monday, May 19 at the downtown branch of the Grand Rapids Public Library. The awards were presented by Commissioner Milinda Ysasi and Historic Preservation Commission Chair Matt Dixon. Among the honorees were several Heritage Hill neighbors which included:

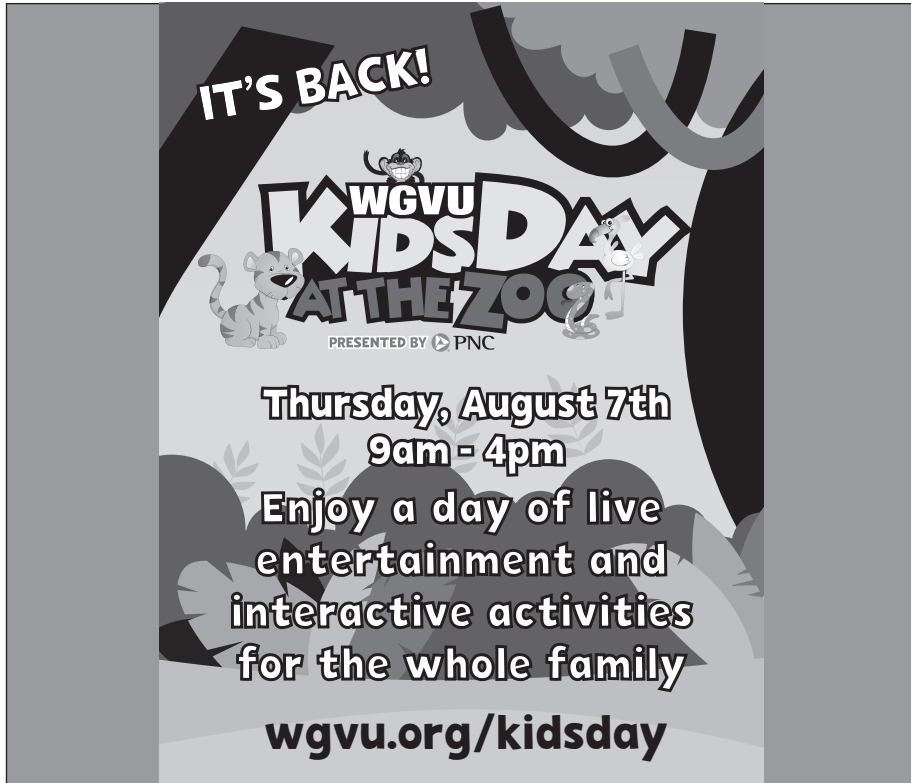
Innovation Central High School ICHS, at 421 Fountain NE, was the City's only high school until Union was built in 1897. Renovations were top to bottom and included masonry, roofing, new larger windows and an extensive renovation to the auditorium that is named after Central graduate, Betty Bloomer Ford. Presidents Teddy Roosevelt and William Taft also spoke in the auditorium.

322 Fountain St. NE

JDE & Associates and Eastown Construction were recognized for their work on Heritage Hill home, 322 Fountain St. NE. The home had fallen into huge disrepair. New flooring systems and other structural elements were installed as well as a beautiful new dark green and black exterior paint scheme.

409 Prospect Ave. SE

Wealthy Prospect LLC began a complete renovation of this Heritage Hill Home in 2023. It was in disrepair



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by Laska Nygaard
& Carly Durham-Bruins

and needed new electrical, plumbing and structural work. The front porch was in disrepair and required an extensive reconstruction.

322 Union Ave. SE

Jeremy Gish was recognized for his work on 322 Union Ave. SE which included plumbing, electrical, mechanicals, kitchen renovations, new roofing and exterior paint. The property is being used as a rental property and required a lot of substantial work.

Peter Bruinsma

Peter Bruinsma, who is a realtor, has worked with the city's historic districts for the past six years educating realtors, buyers and sellers and providing information so that individuals understand what buying and selling historic homes entails.

More Vehicle Break-Ins

As you know if you are signed up for our e-alerts, The Hill has, like the rest of the city, been experiencing an increase in car thefts, car break-ins, and home break-ins as well.

HHA is working with neighbors on blocks who have been especially hit in recent weeks. If you experience a completed or attempted theft or break-in, remember to **(1) report to GRPD**. By reporting to the police, they are able to keep a look out and to help put resources where they are needed. **(2) contact us so that we can also keep track and help to address crime in the neighborhood.**

GRPD reminds us that many auto and home larcenies can be prevented by putting items away and locking up every night - get in the habit of doing it each night with the **9PM Routine**.



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Board Notes

Discussion at the March, 2025 Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting included:

President's Report: B. Cody shared that staff and the Executive Committee are working to keep costs low in light of the possibility of reduced funding due to the uncertainty presented by recent executive orders regarding federal grant funding.

Treasurer's Report: L. Bracken reviewed the February financials, including efforts to streamline collections, looking at moving to an accrual system, continued budget planning and discussion about the possibility of losing the federal grant which may mean reducing staff. L. Bracken followed up about discussions regarding how financial information is shared with neighbors.

Committee Reports:

Land Use: J. Fowler reported that the committee is meeting regularly and focusing this month on the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) which is now scheduled for approval by the City. The committee prepared a letter to the City for board approval. The committee is choosing to focus on the residential portion of the plan and the implications for historic neighborhoods and seeks to counteract the notion that preservation is a barrier to implementation of the plan in our neighborhood. C. Ervine advised that consideration be given to maintaining/preserving historic windows, but considering allowing new window materials in kitchens where food is prepared in the interest of eliminating lead and lead dust. J. Fowler received a request from the Innovation Central school principal to circulate a petition to create traffic calming; the committee thought it would be best to combine that need with the other planning for Lyon/Fountain. Conversation continues with Mobile GR, including making information more easily accessible on their website.

Home Tour: L. Nygaard reported on behalf of S. De Haan, providing an update concerning volunteers at the food truck hub as well as passing on the request that all members sign up



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for a shift or two as well as recruiting five volunteers by the next meeting. Tickets are on sale, postcards and press release going out soon. The board was asked to broadcast the tour far and wide and to forward any suggestions to staff. Discussion included cost reduction plans and several marketing suggestions.

L. Nygaard requested the board to communicate any volunteer details (name/address/phone) as well as encouraging members to recruit sponsors; free tickets are available for volunteers and sponsors.

Community Engagement: A. Larimer reported that she is stepping down as Chair due to work commitments. L. Nygaard reported that the committee will be meeting next week. Mark and Anne Azkoul are joining the team; they have been active for many years with Festival of the Arts. The committee is creating a calendar for the remainder of the year.

Fundraising: D. Cook shared that the committee met and brainstormed ideas including an auction, possibly online. They are looking for online technology and sources of donations. Discussion included further fundraising ideas as well as the possibility of writing grants. Tee-shirt sales during Home Tour were also discussed.

Office Relocation: B. Cody shared that options for office space are expensive and discussed the possibility of going remote is the most likely course of action. Trinity Hospital was approached and asked if HHA could continue month-to-month after the lease ends July 31, 2025. The hospital has not yet provided an official answer but is amenable if their plans allow for that. An inventory of all of the office assets is underway and technology options are being discussed to support remote work and/or office relocation.

Technology: J. Czubko met with staff to talk about Microsoft Office implementation and other goals of the technology committee. The committee needs additional members, including an "inbox" where staff can request/ask questions and team members jump in to help. Additional members could also be a support

system for the staff and keep web site updated with content and social media posts linked with web to auto publish to multiple platforms. The current priority is the phone system. A nimble system will allow us to be remote very easily.

Various CRM programs and phone systems were discussed.

If you would like an item placed on the Board agenda, please call the HHA office at 459-8950 before 4:00 p.m. of the second WEDNESDAY of the month. If you would like to address the Board regarding an agenda item, public comment is taken at the beginning of each meeting. For non-agenda items, public comment is taken at the end of each meeting. Typically, Board meetings run from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.

If you would like to receive monthly Board agendas via email, please email us your request.

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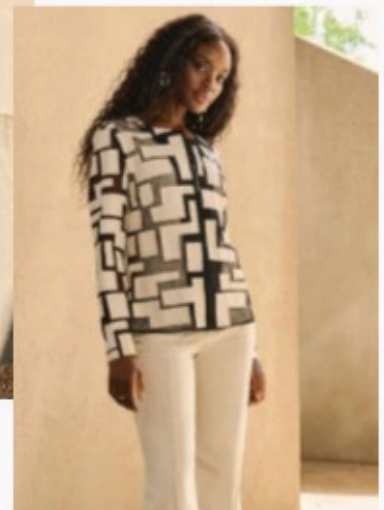
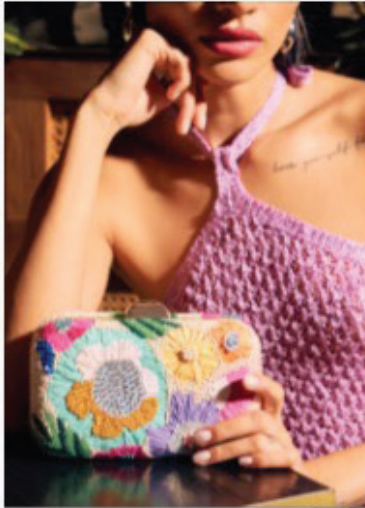
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Neighborhood Improvement & Public Safety
organizing efforts of the Heritage Hill Association
are in part funded by the City of Grand Rapids' Community Development Block Grant Programs.



Heritage Hill Association

252 State St SE Ste 101
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

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2025 DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, July 12, 2025, 7-8pm

Rain date: July 19

Shakespeare in the Park
Pleasant Park, 400 Pleasant St. SE

Wednesday, August 6,

September 3, 2025, 5-7pm

Heritage Hill First Wednesdays
Happy Hours
The Commons @ The Oakwood
547 Cherry St. SE

Wednesday, August 20,

September 17, 2025 @ 7pm

All Heritage Hill Association
meetings are open to neighbors.
HHA Board Meeting
Community Education Conference
Room
Hauenstein Center, 220 Cherry St. SE

Thursday, August 21 @ 7-9pm

Let's Dance! Neighborhood end of
summer square dance
Child Discovery Center Gym
409 Lafayette St SE

Monday, August 18, 2025

Herald content & ads deadline –
September / October issue

Annual Dates

Tuesday, August 5, 2025

National Night Out Picnic
Pleasant Park

Saturday, September 6, 2025

Dumpster Day
Central Reformed Church
Parking Lot

December TBD, 2025

Annual Membership Meeting
Location TBD

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